

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5538

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As of March 4, 2009

**Title:** An act relating to employment opportunities at institutions of higher education.

**Brief Description:** Regarding employment opportunities at institutions of higher education.

**Sponsors:** Senators McAuliffe, Kauffman, Hobbs, Shin, Keiser, Murray, Fraser, Kilmer and Kohl-Welles.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Higher Education & Workforce Development: 2/17/09.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

**Staff:** Aldo Melchiori (786-7439)

**Background:** The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) reports that there were 9,673 full- and part-time state-funded faculty members teaching at community and technical colleges in the fall quarter of 2007. Of those, 3,591 (37 percent) were full-time faculty and 6,082 (63 percent) were part-time. The ratio of part-time to full-time faculty varies significantly depending on course area. Workforce and academic instruction is primarily done by full-time faculty while the reverse is true for pre-college and basic skills instruction. Community and technical college full-time equivalent faculty increased by 2 percent from the previous fall.

During the same quarter, 55 percent of state-supported instruction occurred through full-time faculty, while 45 percent occurred through part-time instructors. The percent of instruction taught by full-time faculty has remained fairly stable for the last five years. A full-time load is defined by each campus and may vary by discipline and mode of instruction.

The median age for full-time faculty was 52 in the fall quarter of 2006, an increase from a median age of 50 in 2002. The SBCTC calculates that nearly 60 percent of full-time faculty will need to be replaced in the next 15 to 20 years due to retirement.

**Summary of Bill:** The bill as referred to committee not considered.

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

**Summary of Bill (Proposed Substitute):** Each community and technical college must create a conversion plan to create more full-time, tenure-track positions. The plans must be submitted to the SBCTC by October 1, 2009, and must include strategies to have 75 percent of state-funded faculty in full time positions by 2015. The plans cannot include discharging currently employed part-time faculty who have taught in the college for three or more years. The plans are submitted each year to the SBCTC as a request for funding for the new full-time positions in relation to the SBCTC budget request to the Legislature. The SBCTC must also submit progress reports regarding faculty conversions to the Legislature by December 1, 2009, and biennially thereafter until 2015.

Each community and technical college must establish a process, subject to collective bargaining, to notify part-time and full-time nontenured faculty of employment assignments for which they are qualified. The colleges must give these faculty priority consideration for these positions. Colleges must also notify and give priority consideration to qualified internal applicants of tenure-track positions. The "notification" includes notification of job openings, before they are posted outside the institution, or a job interview for positions where minimum qualifications have been met.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: We need this bill to give part-time faculty some degree of fair treatment. Part-time instructors can't give the same degree of attention to students and that hurts the students' opportunities for success. Institutions do not value their part-time faculty. This will drive the discussion to the local level where it belongs. Increasing part-time faculty was meant to be a short-term solution to the fiscal crisis of the 1980s, but it became an ongoing policy. Community and technical colleges have plenty of flexibility to respond to the marketplace. Students need more access to their instructors, but part-time faculty are often unavailable because they have multiple commitments.

CON: The SBCTC already has a plan to increase the numbers of full-time faculty; the state just needs to provide the funding. This bill just creates more process and a new plan. Some courses and locations do not lend themselves to full-time faculty. The solution is not to increase full-time faculty, it is to treat part-time faculty better. The community and technical colleges should not be allowed to set limits on the number of courses a part-time faculty person can teach.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Bernal Baca, Sandra Schroeder, Phil Jack, Carol Hamilton, Brian Holt, American Federation of Teachers–Washington; Sharon Weist, Wenatchee Valley College faculty.

CON: John Boesenberg, SBCTC; Keith Hoeller, American Association of University Professors.